

A Joint workshop between the Caribou City Council and the Caribou Planning Board was held on Tuesday, January 17th, at 6:00pm in the Caribou City Council Chambers.

City Councilors Present: Aiken, McDonough II, Theriault, Guerrette, Martin, and McDougall.
City Councilors Absent: Smith.

Planning Board Members Present: Graves, McDonough III, Cyr, Smith, Pelletier and White.

Planning Board Members Absent: Hunter.

The meeting was covered by the Aroostook Republican and Time Warner Cable.

Phil Cyr, Planning Board Chair opened the meeting and asked for public input and no one provided any input.

Chair Cyr then asked if any of the City Councilors wished to make comments.

Councilor McDonough II recommended that we do not allow recreational marijuana in the City of Caribou. Based upon the fact it's not allowed federally, and the 62% of citizens that voted against it.

Councilor Dave Martin discussed how some communities used to be dry in Aroostook County. He asked why pass up on a business in Caribou. He's against the social clubs, but if it's legal then we should allow it to be sold in Caribou. A majority of Mainers approved it, and it's now a law.

Planning Board Member White asked how much weight we should give to the rules/laws/guidelines etc. that the state may come up with. Councilor Martin stated we should wait until state finalizes the rule.

Mayor Aiken said state guidelines should be used. Asked if Caribou wants to engage in retail marijuana sales, and if we allow it we would have to go with the regulations the state comes out with.

Planning Board Chair Cyr stated whatever is put in place initially can always be altered later.

Planning Board Member Smith said we don't know what this will look like in 5 years. We don't know if/when the federal government will allow it or not. She says we should let other communities do the trials of this first. Caribou uses citizen option for a lot of its decisions, and the opinion of 62% of the people in Caribou was to not legalize marijuana.

Chair Cyr discussed the potency of marijuana today versus marijuana in the 1970's. It is at least 4 times as potent today than it was then. He cited the recommendation of the Caribou Police Chief Mike Gahagan that we do not allow it.

Mayor Aiken stated whether we sell it here or not those that want to use it will still be using it.

Planning Board Member White called this an "attractive nuisance". It will cause people to try to get around the system and it would increase the temptation for young people.

Planning Board Member McDonough III agreed it would increase the temptation for young people if we have it here.

Leo Trudel, executive director of Safe Alternatives the medical marijuana dispensary here in Aroostook County addressed the Board. He stated he voted no on the referendum, but the law was passed. He said Caribou issued liquor licenses for 2 new bars in the last year, and those are dangerous. He says there is a speak easy in town who has been selling illegally for quite a while. He doesn't feel Caribou is business friendly, and wants to bring jobs to Caribou. The law will allow people to grow six plants or more. The bigger picture is Caribou will have it in large amounts. His dispensary is the smallest in the state because people grow their own. He says Caribou has the ability to put limitations on how many recreational ones. He said the state will

allow medical dispensaries to dispense retail. He feels he is the best option to serve recreational customers.

Panning Board Member Smith said that Caribou doesn't have to allow a business that does fit in the community.

Mr. Trudel said that is only her opinion.

Mayor Aiken stated he asked his children about what would happen if marijuana was legalized. It came down to those that are doing it now will still do it, people that don't do it now likely won't start. Trudel agrees people won't start doing it now.

Mr. Trudel believes we will find less of it on the black market and less shady deals taking place. Harvard economist states it will be a slight increase, but it will be small.

Mayor Aiken said Canada will likely legalize marijuana country wide, and people won't travel here from Massachusetts to get it. He doesn't agree with selling it here, because what is going to happen with the kids that have access to it.

Mr. Trudel says it is the same with tobacco or alcohol products that have been geared towards younger taste buds. Says it will be dispensed in containers that are hard to open.

It was clarified that any medical dispensary in Caribou would have to be approved by the City before it could sell recreational.

Panning Board Member Smith clarified that we have the right to decide whether or not we want the stores selling it here recreationally. And that is the topic we are here to discuss, not whether or not it is legal to have it or not have it. We can only control if we allow it to be sold recreationally.

Consensus of the Planning Board is unanimously to not allow recreational marijuana to be sold in Caribou. Bless stated he would work with the City Attorney and MMA Legal to draft language to not allow recreational dispensaries in Caribou.

Mr. Trudel said he stated we could find positive information on recreational marijuana which include marijuana policy project and NORML.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36pm.

Austin Bless, City Manager